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VACCINATION

By MR. JOHN PITCAIRN

An Address Delivered before the Committee on Public Health and Sanitation of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, at Harrisburg, March 5, 1907

THE ANTI-VACCINATION LEAGUE OF PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. Porter F. Cope, Secretary
4806 Chester Avenue
Philadelphia

to England from the Empire of the Turks, was hailed as the greatest of medical discoveries! Soon its influence in checking smallpox was spoken of as "one of the best established of medical facts," and the encomiums lavished upon it by the medical profession are equalled only by those that have since been accorded to vaccination. Thus, in 1754, the Royal College of Physicians, of London, passed the following resolution: "The College, having been informed that false reports concerning the success of inoculation in England have been published in foreign countries, think proper to declare their sentiments in the following manner: That the arguments which at the commencement of this practice were urged against it have been refuted by experience; that it is now held by the English in greater esteem and practiced among them more extensively than ever it was before; and that the College thinks it to be highly salutory to the human race." But facts could not be ignored. Instead of proving itself a harmless and beneficent invention, as had been so loudly proclaimed in 1721, it began to be more and more evident that the continued practice of inoculation was attended with an actual increase in the spread of smallpox, each inoculated person becoming a new centre of contagion. And so strongly did this fact impress itself on the British public, that, by act of Parliament of 1840, inoculation, which had been indorsed by the Royal College of Physicians as so "highly salutory", was branded as a crime, and its practice made a penal offence. In Pennsylvania, to the sound sense of our State be it said, it had been so branded sixteen years earlier. This action by the British Parliament, however, was taken some years subsequent to the discovery of vaccination by Edward Jenner, which was at once hailed as a welcome substitute for inoculation,—already regarded as a dangerous and pernicious practice.

Jenner's alleged "great discovery" was given to the world

in the year 1798, and, despite some opposition on the part of those who still defended inoculation, its practice as a supposed preventive of smallpox soon spread over the entire civilized world. It was claimed for it, just as had been claimed for inoculation, that it was "one of the best established of medical facts". Evil results followed vaccination just as they had followed the much-lauded inoculation, and it has been proved again and again, by overwhelming testimony, as will be shown by other speakers to-night, that it was just as great a failure.

Jenner began by claiming that vaccination made a person immune for life; but the facts of observation soon resulted in the term being shortened to fourteen years; then it was made seven; then five; then two; and, in the Spanish-American War, *six months* was the limit of immunity. The constantly shifting and decreasing period sufficiently shows that vaccination *had not* provided immunity; and that it *does not* provide immunity even for six months, is proved by the recent official statistics of our Phillipine Army; for in that Army, in the five years from 1898 to 1902, there were 737 cases of smallpox, with 261 deaths. Referring to this great smallpox incidence and mortality, Chief Surgeon Lippincott reports: "I can say that no army was ever so thoroughly looked after in the matter of vaccination as ours (*i. e.,* the American Philippine Army). Vaccination and revaccination many times repeated went on as regularly as the drills at an army post". Thus do the facts give the lie to the assertion that vaccination prevents smallpox.

We are asked by our opponents what substitute we would offer in place of vaccination? We answer: Clean living, sanitation and isolation. Contrast with this the method of our health officials. They picture the horrors of smallpox; they start a panic; they get the fear-stricken on the run; and then, when they have thus poisoned the mind with fear, they proceed to poison the blood with virus. They

have even insisted upon vaccination in a town where there had not been a case of smallpox for forty years, and then they loudly proclaimed that they had stopped a terrible plague!

Opposition to the practice of vaccination was brought very prominently before the English people a few years ago, by the article on that subject in the 9th Edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, by the eminent pathologist, Doctor Charles Creighton. For the purpose of writing this article, Doctor Creighton, who for many years had believed in and practiced vaccination, went into an exhaustive study of the subject, and it was not long before the conviction forced itself upon him that vaccination is a useless and dangerous practice. He so informed the compilers of the Britannica, but they expressed a desire for the unbiased results of his examination, and the result was—*fifteen columns against vaccination.* "The facts stated in this section," says Doctor Creighton at the beginning of his article, "will come before most readers with the aspect of novelty;" but "the views expressed," he continues, "are the outcome of an independent and laborious research." This article, from so eminent an authority, so disturbed the pro-vaccinists that they sought for an equally eminent scientist to reply. It so happened that about the same time the well-known biologist, Doctor Edgar M. Crookshank, of King's College, London, was devoting himself to pathological researches in connection with the communicable diseases of man and the lower animals, and the question naturally arose whether his observations supported or refuted the conclusions arrived at by Doctor Creighton as the result of his historical researches. Doctor Crookshank likewise went into an exhaustive examination of the subject, and the result was—*two volumes against vaccination.*

I should like to impress these facts upon you. Here we have two men, most eminent in their profession; both of

them entered upon a thorough and original investigation of this question of vaccination, with no other end in view than to show forth its benefits; and in both cases the results of their researches were the same,—an absolute condemnation of vaccination, not only as not affording immunity against smallpox, but as being actually baneful in its results. And I think that any of my hearers who will examine the question for himself will arrive at the same conclusion.

After the publication of Doctor Crookshank's work, the English public became thoroughly aroused, and a Royal Commission was appointed, with Lord Herschell as chairman, to investigate the matter. This Commission, which was in session for seven years, received the testimony of experts from all parts of the world, and its report, comprised in seven large octavo volumes, constitutes what is, perhaps, the most thorough and exhaustive collection of evidence ever made on any subject. The most significant feature of this report is the admission, as stated in the Minority Report, that "It was no longer contended that vaccination prevented smallpox". After the report was received, one of the last acts of the late Lord Salisbury, at the recommendation of this Commission, was the introduction into Parliament of the "Conscience Clause," which was passed unanimously. The "Conscience Clause" was a great victory over compulsory vaccination; yet, there are certain limitations in its administration, and therefore the fight for absolute freedom still continues. At the last Parliamentary election over one hundred members were returned on an anti-vaccination platform; and there is at this time pending a Memorial to the Prime Minister, signed by 174 members of the House of Commons, petitioning for the entire abolition of the Compulsory Vaccination Acts.

It is a humiliating fact to note that while in England, where prevails ultra-conservatism in the changing of laws, enlightened public opinion has secured freedom to its

citizens, the lawmakers of this great State of Pennsylvania, on the other hand, by recent enactment, have *taken away* the freedom of its citizens, and the Health Officer of our State is endeavoring to force upon unwilling citizens a bodily operation which to many of them is utterly abhorrent, —the contamination of their blood with the putrid matter from the running sore of a diseased animal.

When our officials refuse to discuss a question so important to our citizens, their cause must be weak, for no truth is ever hurt by the light of publicity. Yet, this is what the State Health Commissioner has done. An invitation to address a public meeting at Witherspoon Hall, Philadelphia, upon this vital question, signed by John Pitcairn, Maxwell Stevenson, Samuel W. Cooper, Thomas Earle White and Edward D. Wadsworth, was extended to him, to which he replied as follows:

"Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,
Department of Health,
Harrisburg, Pa., May 7, 1906.

MR. JOHN PITCAIRN,
"Philadelphia, Pa.

"Dear Sir:

"In answer to your invitation to speak with Mr. Porter F. Cope, on vaccination, I beg to say that I will have to decline, upon the ground that the value of vaccine as a prophylactic against smallpox is one of the best settled medical questions; and further, for the reason that I find it absurd to discuss medical questions of such importance with laymen.

"Yours truly,
"SAMUEL G. DIXON."

Now, Gentlemen, most of you are laymen, and therefore, according to our Commissioner, your views upon this

question are of no value. You may have in your library all that has been written upon it, pro and con; you may have made a careful study of the subject for years, as is the case with Mr. Cope and others, and still, being laymen, your views upon this question are not worthy of consideration. It is said that a person who has not considered both sides of a question understands neither side. Whether our Commissioner of Health has investigated both sides of this question, I know not; but, certainly he deems discussion beneath his dignity. We *seek* discussion, for we wish to show the *truth* concerning vaccination. There is no *money* in the cause we represent; it is the cause of truth, the cause of freedom, the cause of humanity; but it is said that there are twenty million dollars invested in vaccine farms in this country.

Who are the leading opponents of vaccination? A host of honest physicians of world-wide reputation, who have practiced vaccination, have seen the evil effects of it, and have had the courage and honesty to bear testimony to them; such medical men as Creighton, Crookshank, Hadwin, and Wilkinson, of England, Hodge, Winterburn, Oswald, Ross, and Leverson of this country, Forster of Germany and Ricord of France; such eminent scientists as Herbert Spencer, William Tebb, Alfred Russel Wallace, Professor Ruata of Italy, Professor Vogt of Switzerland, and others too numerous to mention, all of whom have based their opposition upon facts brought to the light and viewed without prejudice.

And upon what basis do the advocates of vaccination rely? Upon ignorance, superstition, and the suppression of facts. Witness how studiously they avoid a discussion; how carefully they conceal the many deaths directly due to vaccination, and ascribe them to other causes. And the reason for this suppression of facts is not far to seek, for if the facts were known, and the truth concerning those

facts, it would not be possible to hold people in subjection to any dogma which will not bear the light of truth. The chief instrumentality in the establishment of this practice of vaccination has been the ignorance of the people concerning its true nature; and for all the many years during which it has flourished, there has been a constant effort, by concealment or distortion of facts, to keep the people in ignorance. Ask the ordinary man, uninformed on the subject, why he believes in vaccination, and he will tell you it is because the doctors believe it; because they have told him it prevents smallpox. They have not told him of the deaths it has caused, of the diseases, of the horrible deformities. No!—for to do this would open his eyes, would set him thinking, and would lead him finally to repudiate "one of the best settled medical questions". It has remained for those who are opposed to vaccination, and be it said to the honor of the medical profession, their ranks have included many doctors, it has remained for those opposed to vaccination to lift up the veil of secrecy and to show the truth about this practice and its effects. And when the truth is known, when the question comes into the light of fullest publicity; when all the people know the facts,—then will be the end of vaccination. This is why we desire discussion; this is why our opponents have so often refused discussion. Discussion would bring light; it would reveal the truth; and, in the light of the truth, it would no longer be possible to hold men's minds in subjection to a medical practice that has no justification in facts or in reason. The defence of vaccination is based on a pseudo-scientific hypothesis which will not bear the light of *facts*. The vaccinists tell us that the injection of the matter from the putrid sore of a diseased calf will set up a chemical action that will increase the white blood corpuscles and thus the resisting power of the blood itself. The sacred blood of a healthy person, as God made it, is not good enough for them. It has not enough "white

corpuscles", and therefore they must "doctor" it. They seek to interfere with Nature's laboratory which the Creator gives to a healthy child! With their man-made science, they would improve upon God's handiwork!

The mere statement of this presumptuous claim is enough to lead the man of common sense to bring vaccination into question, if not to damn it outright, for the question will at once occur to him: Can it be right to pollute the human blood—the very life and health-giving stream of the body? Is such a practice right? Is it rational? Does it agree with the dictates of good, plain common sense? Gentlemen, true science, however deep and recondite it be, cannot be contrary to common sense, and common sense will never sanction the pollution of the blood as a means of promoting health or warding off disease.

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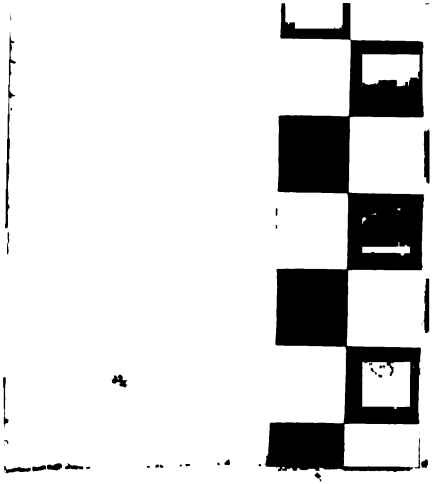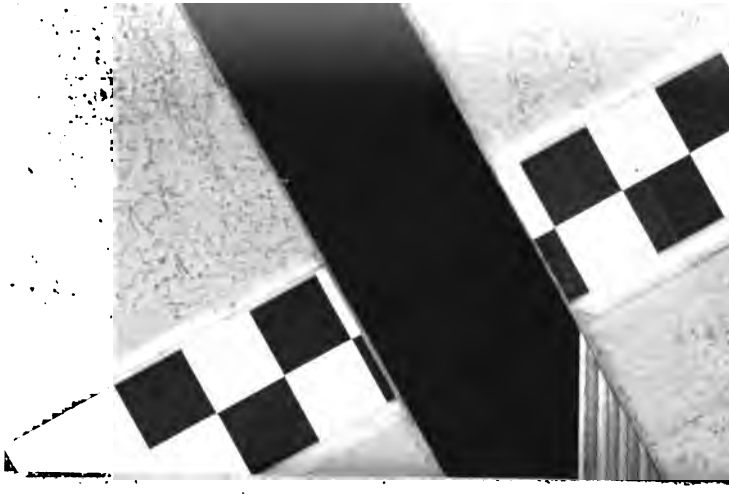
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